

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method comprising:
 - coupling a housing to a portion of a bed, the housing having a surface defining an interior region, the surface being formed to include an opening in communication with the interior region;
 - placing a speaker in the interior region of the housing adjacent to the opening, the speaker being configured to generate sound waves;
 - providing a waterproof cover which is configured so that the sound waves are audible through the cover; and
- 10 coupling the waterproof cover to the surface of the housing so that the cover seals the opening against fluid penetration through the opening and into the interior region of the housing, thereby permitting washing of the housing and the waterproof cover to clean the housing and cover after the bed has been used.
- 15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of coupling a waterproof cover to the surface of the housing includes the step of permanently securing the cover to the surface of the housing with an adhesive.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the housing is formed to include a plurality of openings, and the waterproof cover seals all of the plurality of openings against water penetration.
- 25 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the waterproof cover is made from a polyester material.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the waterproof cover has a thickness of about 0.003 to about 0.005 inches.
- 30 6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the housing is coupled to a siderail of the bed.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of washing the housing and the waterproof cover comprises spraying a cleaning fluid on the housing and the waterproof cover.

5 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of washing the housing and the waterproof cover comprises transporting the bed through a bed washing device.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the washing step is repeated after each use of the bed by a different person.

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10. An apparatus for use on a hospital bed, the apparatus comprising:

 a patient barrier adapted to be coupled to the hospital bed, the patient barrier including a surface being formed to include an opening;

 a speaker configured to generate sound waves and supported by the

15 patient barrier to facilitate the passage of sound waves through the opening;

 a switch having an actuator, the switch being supported by the patient barrier; and

 a waterproof cover attached to the patient barrier and positioned to cover both the opening and the switch actuator, the cover being further configured so that sound waves generated by the speaker are audible through the cover.

20 11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the patient barrier is one of a siderail, a head end rail, and a foot end rail.

25 12. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the cover is permanently attached to the patient barrier.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the cover prevents water penetration through the opening and into contact with the speaker and water penetration into contact with
30 the switch actuator.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the waterproof cover is attached to the patient barrier with an adhesive.
15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the waterproof cover has a thickness of about 0.003 to about 0.005 inches.
16. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the waterproof cover includes a speaker location indicia located adjacent the opening of the patient barrier.
- 10 17. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the switch is an illuminated switch generating light and waterproof cover is translucent in the vicinity of the switch so that light generated by the switch is partially transmitted through the waterproof cover.
- 15 18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the switch controls a system selected from the group of a nurse call system, a bed articulation control, a bed hi/lo control, a room lighting control, a music control, and a television control.
19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the cover includes a switch location indicia located adjacent the switch actuator.
- 20 20. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the patient barrier includes a patient-facing side surface and a caregiver-facing side surface, the patient-facing side surface and the caregiver-facing side surface each being formed to include an opening to facilitate passage of sound waves from the speaker therethrough, the apparatus including first and second waterproof covers attached to the patient-facing side surface and the caregiver-facing side surface, respectively, to seal the openings against water penetration.